1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Natures Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

● 123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with 181 the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1 : 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

eval. Such sights and sounds! A minstrel singing his subtle lyrics as he bows a one-stringed fiddle; in the dark interiors of church, barefoot deacons holding beeswax candles and swinging vessels of smoking incense; the pomp of a nobleman moving cross country with his crowded entourage; a young girl washing the feet of her father's guest; warriors boasting with their martial chants; the stately rhythms of clergy chanting and dancing under the mid-day sun; the open marketplace, offering all manner of livestock, grain, and spices; the counsel of an elder, resolving a dispute; the simple dignity of the bow when two men meet.

The scholar's job is of course to transcend such a medley of impressions and to discern the patterns of order through which such details are bound together in a living whole. In carrying out this task I have not imposed any one methodological framework on my materials. Rather, as the reader of Robert Redfield's methodological handbook, *The Little Community,* will readily appreciate, I have sought to organize these materials in terms of half a dozen of the more common viewpoints used in the study of human communities. Roughly speaking, I have looked upon Amhara culture as a history (chapter ii), an outlook on life (chapter iii), a way of growing up (chapter iv), a social structure (chapter v), a kind of psychological orientation (chapter vi), and as "a combination of opposites" (chapter vii). The observational techniques employed in the course of this study have been accordingly diverse, ranging from the analysis of literary texts and oral traditions to the use of questionnaires, projective tests, interviews, and participant observation.

Yet however gratifying the contemplation of a traditional culture may be, the student of traditional societies today finds it difficult to remain aloof from the historical changes which now permeate the world. As he talks with the bright young men of the cities, he finds considerable ambivalence regarding the value of traditional ways. He finds Ethiopians acutely conscious that their traditional life, for all its charm, has been chronically afflicted with war, pestilence, famine, and disease, and that their traditional social order has encouraged the many to toil and the few to live in idle luxury. He sees them bitter that Ethiopia has remained backward—"*wada hwāla qaratch!*"—and isolated from the great advances of the human spirit achieved elsewhere. They are anxious to enter the modern world.

And thus the aesthetic impulse is joined by the moral. The sociologist feels drawn to contribute what he can to elucidate the sometimes desperate problems faced by societies trying to make a rapid transition to modernity. In this he is inspired in part by the history of his discipline. The contrast between traditional and modern society has constituted the central substantive problem in sociology since Auguste Comte named the discipline well over a century ago, and some of the foremost proponents of sociology—notably, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim—have understood their calling to in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 a world-wide dialogue about the limitations and potentialities of human experience. For by any reckoning, a key defining characteristic of modernity is the prominence of education; and education in its truest sense, as Robert Redfield has put it, is "conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone."

000 It is in the spirit of Robert Redfield that this book was conceived. I should like to place this remembrance of him at the head of the list of acknowledgments which follows. The debt owed by those who had the fortune to study the art of questioning with him is not to be measured.

There are numerous other debts I wish to acknowledge as the author of this book, with the regret that they cannot all be identified individually. I am 122 deeply grateful to:

• 128

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D. N. L.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hābashā,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1. [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

optimum realization of *all* values possible in a given historic situation. He affirms the human values of modernization, yet conceives of modernity not as of a single, fixed nature but as relative to the cultural context in which modernization takes place. Given the commitment to modernization he would sustain traditional values wherever possible; would modify them where feasible; and would reject them where necessary. The chief questions raised from this point of view will be outlined presently, since it is the approach we ourselves shall be following. 121

All of the intellectual positions just identified have been taken by respectable thinkers. All are to be found among the members of the transitional societies, distributed according to the individual's position in the social structure and, secondarily, according to his psychological makeup. Within the social sciences, moreover, the subject matters of the various disciplines incline them to one or another of these positions. Roughly speaking, one may say that heretofore the anthropologist has tended to take the Traditionalist position; the economist and the Marxist sociologist have been Modernists; the political scientist has leaned toward the Conciliatory position; while sociologists have been oriented as Skeptics and Pragmatists.

THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAGMATIST

Our intention in this book is to analyze a number of aspects of the confrontation between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's quest for modernity from the viewpoint of a Pragmatist. Three general questions express the main concerns of this viewpoint: (1) What is the nature of the traditional culture, and what are its more enduring beliefs and values? (2) What aspects of modern culture are of interest to the society, and what are the processes by which they are introduced and institutionalized? (3) Given this interest in modernization, in what ways has it been frustrated by certain features of the traditional culture?

These three questions divide the following chapters into three pairs. Chapters ii and iii attempt a sympathetic understanding of some aspects of Amhara culture and an assessment of their positive relevance for Ethiopia in transition. Chapters iv and v deal with aspects of Amhara culture which have been found inadequate for modernization and with the natural processes by which they have been replaced in part by modernizing structures. Chapters vi and vii then explore aspects of the traditional Amhara culture which appear to be obstacles to the realization of the modernist goals. 121 128

We shall begin by exploring one of the traditional bases of cultural identity among the Amhara, one of those primordial sentiments whose integrity is a condition of vitality for a traditional people.[11] Vis-à-vis outsiders, the Amhara identify strongly with their religion, language, and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as [186]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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• 128
[186]

part of a common nationality. Among themselves, however, the Amhara place great stress on region of origin. Deeply sentimental about their homelands, they regard those whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions. In chapter ii, two of these areas which hold a special place in Ethiopian history are explored in some detail. The history, ethos, and cultural significance of Manz and Gondar are discussed, partly to provide an introduction to Amhara culture that has some historical depth, and partly as background to the general question of the place of primordial sentiments like regionalism in a modernizing society.

Chapter iii proceeds to examine the matrix of Amhara culture, the world of the peasant. Its rhetorical aim is chiefly to bring the little-known peasant into sharper focus, to reaffirm the peasant world as one worthy of attention and respect. This will be done, first, by describing the social setting of peasant life, and the main events which make up the daily round and annual cycle of the typical Amhara. Then we shall explore the world view of the Amhara peasant, the main ideas and attitudes through which he interprets his experience. In conclusion, we shall discuss the relation of some aspects of this world view to certain aspects of modern culture.

Chapter iv proceeds from the fact that the skills and values needed for effective participation in a modernizing society cannot be imparted by the traditional processes of socialization during adolescence. With the establishment of a government school system a new and separate pattern has come into being that exists largely, though not wholly, in isolation from the traditional agents and mechanisms of secondary socialization. The subject of this chapter is thus the contrasting conditions in which an Amhara youth is brought up in the traditional and modernizing sectors of Ethiopian society. This account is followed by a portrayal of the outlook of Ethiopian students today, with emphasis on the question of the continuity and discontinuity of their beliefs, tastes, and values with those of traditional Amhara culture.

In chapter v our attention shifts to the elite structure of Amhara-Tigre society. In this sphere modernization has proceeded, not by the addition of a novel structure as in the case of secondary socialization during adolescence, but through a process of differentiation within the existing order and deliberate co-ordination by the sovereign. We shall discuss, first, the traditional elites of monarchy, nobility, and clergy; and then the changes in the status of these elites and the emergence of the new elites of government officials and a modern-educated "intelligentsia."

A key question to emerge from this chapter concerns what appears to be the relative ineffectuality and passivity of the modernizing intelligentsia as a whole. This is a complex and difficult question, only partly to be explained by the political conditions which are referred to in the chapter. We shall sug-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and modernity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4	Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.

† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (52.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for considerable strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1964)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

6

ORALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP

121 In the previous chapter we observed that modern-educated Ethiopians, par-
571 ticularly those who were educated abroad, acquired knowledge, skills, patriotic motivation, and social position with which they might conceivably have made substantial reforms and innovations in Ethiopia's institutions. And yet, in their own eyes as in the eyes of some high government officials and foreign observers, they have done relatively little. Their behavior has been marked by a conspicuous absence of creative leadership and solidary action.

Among many of the modern-educated this alleged sin of omission has, in turn, generated an underlying current of reproach against the government and at times against themselves. We have described some features of Ethiopia's domestic political situation which have limited the freedom of modern-educated Ethiopians to carry out progressive activities. A number of them have proceeded from awareness of those limitations to placing all blame on the government for Ethiopia's slow pace of development. Others, however, have turned some if not all of that reproach inward. "It is up to us," they say, "and we have done nothing. Why have we failed? Why have we no moral backbone, no character?"

121 This chapter and the next are concerned with the basis of this latter re-
• 128 proach, as well as with the more general task of enriching our understanding
571 of traditional Amhara culture. We shall proceed on the assumption that insofar as modern-educated Ethiopians have failed to take decisive steps in developing their country they have been held back by other constraints and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees:

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental authority is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently*. The superior is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF AMHARA DISEASE BELIEFS

• 128 This chapter describes the "natural" environment in which the Amhara set their system of disease beliefs. The description is in five steps, opening with an account of human physiology as it is conceived by the Amhara. This is followed by an enumeration of the agencies held responsible for transforming the man of good health into a sickman. Each pathogenic agency is described in terms of its physiological effects and symptomatic expressions. As its third step, this chapter considers these symptoms from a nosological point of view, that is, with regards to the rules by which symptoms are grouped under specific disease names, and by which these classifications are related to one another to form a disease-name taxonomy. [753] The Amhara disease-name taxonomy is simple, and by itself reveals relatively little about the system of disease beliefs of which it is a part. For this, a fourth step is required. Here, the specific disease-names are considered from an etiological perspective, in terms of the explanations associated with the onset of various ailments. In the text, a typology of five etiologies is described. The etiologies are unnamed, but implicit throughout the range of Amhara prophylactic,

128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

75 827 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of physiological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of pxphylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources [128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

827 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

and balazar-healers, but semantically that term tends to emphasize the practitioner's ability as a seer rather than as a therapist. Moreover, the atmakiy (annointer) is never referred to as "tonkway", even though his powers are also derived from supernaturals. When, in conversation, it is necessary to distinguish this category of practitioner (including the atmakiy) from the "secular healer" (categories 1 and 2), the title 'wogeysa' is extended to subsume all of the latter as a class.

Table three outlines the semantic distribution of Amhara practitioner titles.

*756 It is the intention of this chapter to describe
*759 curerers of the first and second categories, from the
• [128] perspective of the technical requirements of their respective therapeutic strategies. The chapter also considers two additional healers, the cupper (agamiy) and the tattooist (tokwariy). Like the practitioners of the first and second categories, both are "secular" healers, since their therapeutic strategies and the sources of their curing powers clearly exclude them from the third practitioner category (i.e., healers with supernaturally [196] derived powers). However, neither cupper nor tattooist fits neatly, semantically or therapeutically, into one of the secular categories, but will be shown to share characteristics of both.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND CLIENT

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This chapter describes 1) the kinds of decisions which a client must make when choosing a secular practitioner to treat a specific disease episode, and 2) the kinds of information which are required by the client in order to make such decisions. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first of these, non-herbalists (who are selected simply, by matching practitioner with ailment) are contrasted with herbalists (whose selection takes cognizance of differences in practitioner grades, as well as in ailment domains). The selection of herbalists is examined through the use of two formal descriptions. The first is an ideal description, and incorporates all selections that are rationally possible for any episode. This is then compared with a description which incorporates all empirically observed incidents involving the selection of herbalists. The section concludes with the description of a type of disease episode in which the sickman ultimately enters a medically self-sufficient healing coterie.

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The remainder of this chapter provides empirical data which quantify and otherwise annotate the analysis which precedes them. The second section describes the distribution of secular healers in a sample of rural

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hamlets and town wards. The healers are considered in terms of 1) their disease-name specialties, 2) their professional grades, and 3) the geographical limits of their professional reputations. In order to place these practitioners in their social and professional milieux, this section begins with a description of relevant social and demographic characteristics of the parish and its hamlets, and of the varieties of urban wards found in the Begemder highlands.

SELECTING A SECULAR PRACTITIONER

It is clear from the preceeding chapter that 1) herbalists are distinguished from other secular healers by a distinctive classificatory system, and 2) this distinction can be functionally related to certain features of the healers' respective practices. Foremost among these features is the relative uniformity of healing powers of practitioners. While there is substantial uniformity within each named category of chirurgeon,[9] the herbalists working within any single disease-name specialty are arrayed along a wide range of powers and thera-

[9]For convenience, "chirurgeon" is used here to describe all secular practitioners who are not herbalists.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: THE POWER TO HEAL

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This chapter considers the attribution of differential healing powers to Amhara healers by their public. The analysis focuses on the awakiy debtera, as the Amhara model of a powerful healer, and the standard against which other practitioners are measured. The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which considers an aspect of the debtera's healing powers. The first section describes lay perspectives of the debtera-healer. Laymen trace the debtera's abilities to notions of generic power, ostensibly derived from ganel familiars. The second section considers the debtera's relations with ganels as he in fact experiences them. The significant technical and moral differences between the real ties and those misconceived by laymen are indicated. The final section examines the real sources of the debtera's medical superiority, and finds them in the unique professional advantages which he enjoys.

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THE LAYMAN'S CONCEPTION OF THE DEBTERA'S HEALING POWER

Technical Considerations. The debtera's public explains his medical superiority over secular practitioners in terms of the technical differences which they perceive